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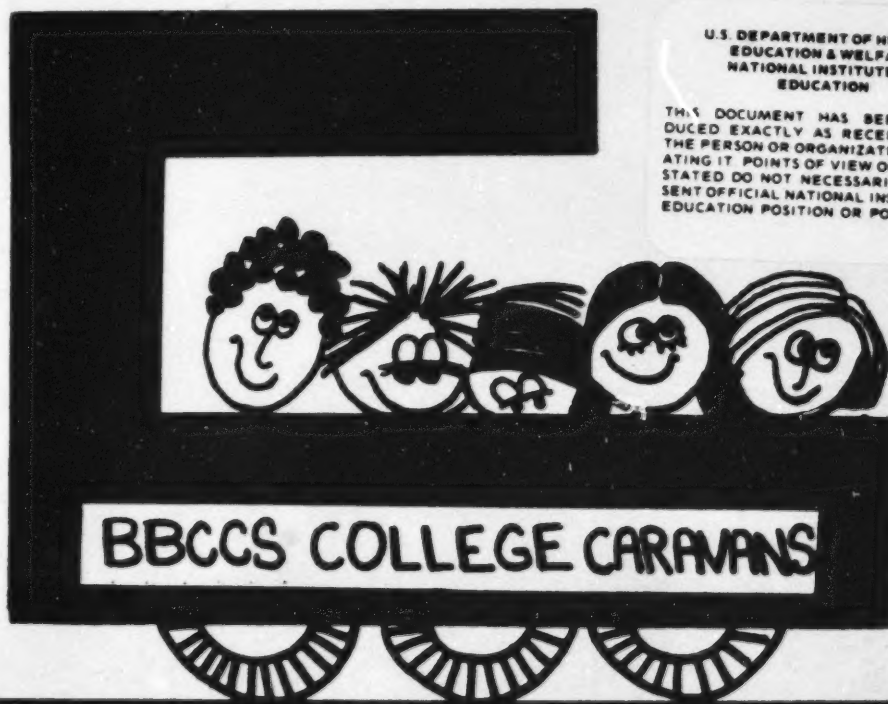
ABSTRACT

In recent years many communities, under the sponsorship of the B'nai B'rith Career and Counseling Services, are offering an alternative to the college visit by individual students and their parents. This alternative is the college caravan. By definition, a college caravan is an organized, guided inspection of a selected number of college campuses by a group of interested high school students. The tour includes an introduction to the academic program of the college, its philosophical approach, the educational approach, the faculty and administration, and the physical and geographical layout. Living facilities, costs involved, the make-up of the student body, general educational and total atmosphere, and other facets of college life are also revealed to the prospective student. At best, a college caravan may serve as a preliminary orientation to college life. In addition, it may serve as an impetus for the development of an effective set of criteria for college selection by the Prospective student. This report discusses the advantages of using this type of group visitations to provide the student an opportunity to investigate a prospective college in some depth. It includes a "College Evaluation Checklist" to act as a standard by which the student can judge the institutions. The active and organized approach to college visitations has applicability to all prospective college students. (Author/SJL)

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...by Joel H Goldberg, Director
BBCCS of Northern New Jersey

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BBCCS COLLEGE CARAVANS

by

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BBCCS of Northern New Jersey

Introduction

Today's youth face many confusing trends. Many of the previous generation were convinced that a college education was a key to their future career. Today, significant numbers of college graduates are unemployed or underemployed. The teaching profession, for example, is no longer an easy haven for girls who can't think of any other career, or males who are in between career decisions. The present unemployment situation for college graduates is forcing many prospective college students to question "Is college really for me? What other options are open to me?". At present, approximately 50% of college age youth attend college. Of affiliated Jewish youth, 95% attend college. Moreover, the college they attend makes a big difference in their choice of mate and career.

Current economics and "civil rights" concepts have necessitated changing financial aid patterns. Initial scholarship screening may still be based on academic excellence, but the amount of an award is need-based. Reduced government funding has resulted in fewer fellowships in science, technology, and most other areas. Higher interest rates make educational loans more expensive. The colleges themselves, in order to meet the inflationary period, have been forced to raise tuition fees almost yearly. This trend will probably continue during the decade ahead. Some parents today display chagrin and tell counselors and admissions officials, "Eighteen years ago we took out an insurance policy for our child. The agent claimed that this policy would provide a college education." The policy was for \$1,500. At many schools, this sum does not even cover the cost of room and board for one year. Today, expenses for a four-year private college education can range from \$4,000 or more for a commuting student to \$20,000 or more for a resident student at a more expensive and prestigious

private school. Financial burdens are drastically changing the applications behavior of prospective college students. Public institutions are being flooded with applications because of their substantially lower costs. Many of the heretofore selective private colleges are experiencing a noticeable reduction in the number of applications received because of their high costs.

College admissions, nevertheless, remain critical. The reasons, however, are not the same as in past years. Schools, for example, are no longer a guarantee of deferrment from the Army. The fact that a college education may shape a person's future, as well as today's changing employment opportunities and dollar availability, makes college selection much more difficult. The needs for the college caravans are multifaceted ones.

Is It Necessary to Visit a College?

College selection is one of the more important and confusing decisions that the academically-oriented high school student must make. Aside from the obvious impact higher education will immediately and ultimately make on the life of the student, college is also an enormously expensive undertaking. Within the next five years, the cost of a college education will probably be considerably more expensive than today. The process of selection, therefore, should be systematically and seriously undertaken. The question, "Is it really necessary to visit a college?" should be answered with an emphatic "Yes!!". By visiting a college the student can obtain a first-hand view of the school about which he has read. He may be provided with concrete support for his interest in the school. Or, a visit may help the student weed out for himself less desirable possibilities. College visitation prior to application should also lower the high rate of college drop-outs and transfers. The average drop-out rate of colleges today is approximately 50%. By a close and realistic examination of schools before application and attendance, these figures might be substantially lowered.

Many documentary films which try to capture the spirit and personality of different college types are now available. If a first-hand, "in person" visit is not possible, or if the distance is too far for the average college caravan, then this would be a valuable resource. Second choice, the personal college visit, however, can give the most accurate, reliable and up-to-date information.

The College Caravan

In recent years many communities, under the sponsorship of the B'nai B'rith Career and Counseling Services, are offering an alternative to the college visit by individual students and their parents. This alternative is the college caravan.

By definition, a college caravan is an organized, guided inspection of a selected number of college campuses by a group of interested high school students. The tour includes an introduction to the academic program of the college, its philosophical approach, the educational approach, the faculty and administration, and the physical and geographical layout. Living facilities, costs involved, the make-up of the student body, general educational and total atmosphere and other facets of college life are also revealed to the prospective student.

At best, a college caravan may serve as a preliminary orientation to college life. In addition, it may serve as an impetus for the development of an effective set of criteria for college selection by the prospective student.

The Advantages

The college caravan can provide one way for a student to investigate a prospective college in some depth. It is usually less expensive than visiting by oneself and paying all costs (transportation, meals, housing, etc.) on an individual rather than a group basis. Bus service can be enlisted at a proportion-

ately lower rate when a stated number of students are involved. Motels and hotels usually provide special rates for large groups. Chaperones are often offered free accommodations. Dining in college facilities can be inexpensive and informative as well. The fee structure for many two-day college tours can be estimated at between \$35 and \$50+ a person, depending on the locale, time of year, distance, and number of students involved.

Another advantage of the college caravan for many students may be the fact that parents are not involved. Many adolescents feel less inhibited and more able to interact and react to a new environment when not encumbered by parental fears and expectations. Questions are easier to ask. Answers often are more easily digested. In addition, a trained leader can highlight the issues. Within the tour itself, discussion can lead to new questions and considerations. Access to the heretofore unrevealed opinions of a student sometimes is facilitated when the parental adult world is not present.

How To Organize A College Caravan

Caravans are most often organized by Career and Counseling Services Chairmen of B'nai B'rith Lodges and B'nai B'rith Women's Chapters. They are also arranged by District BBCCS Chairmen, other important B'nai B'rith leaders, and often by BBCCS offices themselves.

Initially, the geographical areas of most interest to local students should be determined. Schools and locations increase and decrease in popularity as generations of students graduate from high school. In the Northern New Jersey BBCCS office, for example, it has been evidenced by their counselors that Washington, D.C. and Boston, Massachusetts are enjoying the greatest popularity today. There is also increasing interest in smaller and more rural colleges, including experimental colleges, than in the past. It may be wise to consult the local BBCCS office, high school guidance department, or local youth leaders to

determine areas of popularity for students in your own area. Statistics are often available on the geographical concentration of past college alumni in the local area in which you live.

The next step is the selection of a representative sample of schools to be visited. It is feasible to visit four schools over a two-day period. Caravan leaders, with the help of BBCCS professional staff, attempt to select colleges which present a continuum of very competitive to less competitive student demands. Selection of schools to be visited in this manner can insure the interest of a wide range of students in the caravan. In any event, a sampling of different types of schools (large, small, public, private, etc.) should be included on any college caravan agenda.

When the choice of schools has been determined, write to the college admissions office in care of the Director of Admissions. Carefully acquaint the Director with the projected caravan schedule and, even more important, with the goals of your group (see Sample 1). Many college administrators are eager to entertain college caravans. Request an agenda for the visit. This schedule should include a meeting with admissions officers, class visitations, dormitories, study facilities, student union, B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation and other religious facilities, library, and eating facilities. The college calendars should be checked to make certain schools are not on vacation schedules during the caravan tour. It is best to see the schools "in action."

Once the college responds positively with an agenda, determine the number of students to be included on the tour. Arrange for bus transportation (Appendix A), adequate sleeping and eating facilities and competent chaperones as well, including, if possible, a professional BBCCS counselor. With a flexible, but organized, schedule in hand (Sample 2) present the package to the student population. Publicize the caravan through B'nai B'rith Lodges and B'nai B'rith Women's

Chapters bulletins as well as in local schools, community and youth organizations such as AZA, BBG, and synagogue youth organizations. (See Samples 3 and 4.) Notices may also be placed in community newspapers. (See Samples 5 and 6.) Such publicity ordinarily insures more than enough participants. Make certain the publicity campaign is carried out far in advance of the date scheduled. Provide for adequate registration procedures. (See Samples 7, 8 and 9.)

Critical to a successful college caravan is a well-planned pre-trip meeting for interested students. This meeting may be held at the local BBCCS office. A good start can be the distribution of such complimentary booklets as "Three Steps for College Entrance," published by BBCCS and the President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped, "Facing Facts About Your College Career," published by Prudential Insurance Company of America, and the National Vocational Guidance Association's "How to Visit a College."

The preliminary meeting should center on general discussions about college attendance. The speaking services of a BBCCS professional counselor or a school or appropriate community leader can be enlisted. Attempt to deal with anxieties and questions the group may have relative to the colleges to be visited and college in general. Ideally, this pre-trip discussion will produce a "College Evaluation Check List" to act as a standard by which to judge the institutions. The following is an example of such a list:

1. What are my chances for admission?
2. What is the attitude of students currently in college?
3. Can my parents and I afford this college?
4. How realistically will school personnel present the college?
5. What are the future academic plans of the school?
6. Is the distance from home an advantageous one for me?
7. Do many students leave the campus on weekends?

8. How competitive is the school of my choice?
9. Is the size of the school appropriate for me?
10. What is the makeup of the student body -- religious, geographic, coed, fraternities, etc.?
11. Is there a Hillel House or Counselorship or other religious facilities on campus?
12. What is the nature of academic courses offered?
13. Are courses offered in Judaica?
14. Are housing facilities adequate for my needs?
15. How adequate is the library (number of books, pamphlets, films, etc.)?
16. What are the opportunities for social life?
17. What are the resources of the community -- cultural and social activities, etc.?
18. How does the community react to students?
19. How much individual instruction is available?
20. What specialized facilities, such as Placement Service, Counseling, Financial Aid, etc. are available?

This initial discussion should be viewed as an on-going process to be continued during and at the end of the trip. Again, a professional discussion leader can be useful to help direct and channel this discussion. A follow-up questionnaire may be used (see Sample 10) though a meeting is mandatory in order to crystallize the myriad reactions of the students as well as to reveal suggestions for future college caravans. Further follow-up (Appendix B) may come from the local BBCCS office to provide counseling for those students who still have unanswered questions and are unable to decide what is best for themselves.

A well-administered College Caravan can provide youth with a well planned, inside view of colleges today, and the opportunity to make the most appropriate college choice for themselves.

APPENDIX A

GENERAL BUS COMPANY INFORMATION

1. Contact a local bus company. A local company may be less expensive. Make certain the company is fully insured.
2. Obtain prices on different buses (some are smaller than others and have varying facilities - deluxe facilities, i.e., bathroom, stereo tape recordings, etc.).
3. Check on the bus driver's accommodations and payment.
4. Approximate size of bus: 49-53 passengers; other sizes are available.
5. Costs: One-day trip -- leaving 7 A.M., returning 9 P.M., approximately \$138.00.

Overnite trip -- three days - 2 nights - 47 passenger bus, approximately \$561.00.

Some bus companies will provide free flyers describing the trip. One motel/hotel room is usually provided at no cost when you fill a certain number of seats on the bus.

The National BBCCS Office has made arrangements with Trailways Bus System so that a Special College Caravan bus trip may be planned anywhere in the United States. For details, contact National B'nai B'rith Career and Counseling Services, 1640 Rhode Island Avenue, N.W., Washington, D. C. 20036.

APPENDIX B

POST-CARAVAN LETTER TO ALL PARTICIPANTS

(sample)

Date

Name
Address
City, State, Zip Code

Dear :

We hope that you enjoyed the recent College Caravan to _____
(names of schools) sponsored by BBCCS and that it was helpful
as well as enjoyable. Choosing the right college is, of course, a
very important step in preparing for your future. We would like to
remind you that the BBCCS office has many reference volumes and col-
lege catalogues in its library that can assist you in making the cor-
rect choice. You are welcome to visit the library during office hours
and review the material in it.

May we also call to your attention the career and counseling services
which are offered by BBCCS to high school students to aid them in find-
ing answers to their questions about career and college choice. Through
interviews with BBCCS counselors and the use of psychological tests,
a student can obtain a better picture of his interests and abilities
and how they fit into the requirements of various occupational fields.
College majors are chosen as well.

The enclosed brochure tells you more about the services of BBCCS. May
I suggest that you read it and perhaps discuss it with your parents.
If you would like to arrange for an appointment, please call me at

(phone number) . I look forward to hearing from you.

Finally, we are enclosing a questionnaire (Sample 10) to help us plan
our next trip. We would appreciate your answering the questions and
returning the questionnaire in the enclosed envelope. Thank you for
your cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

Name
Title

ABC/de
Encls. (2)

SAMPLE 1

Date

Director of Admissions
Office of Admissions
College
City, State, Zip Code

Dear Sir:

B'nai B'rith Women, District No. 1, (or name of your group) is sponsoring a series of College Caravans which attract the interest of many eleventh and twelfth grade high school students. Many of these students have demonstrated an interest to personally visit your campus.

If convenient, our group of approximately forty students and several staff and chaperones would like to visit your school on (day, date and hours) Tuesday, October 24, 1972, from 12:30 to 3:30 P.M. Could one of your admissions officers meet with our group to discuss the policies of the school, tuition, entrance requirements, courses offered and other pertinent information on student life? We would also appreciate a tour of the campus including classes, study facilities, student union, B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation and other religious facilities, library and eating facilities.

Thank you for your cooperation. We look forward to your early reply with interest.

Sincerely yours,

Name
Title

ABC/de

SAMPLE 2

COLLEGE CARAVAN SCHEDULE

CARAVAN #1

A two (2) day trip, October 30 and 31, 1972.

FROM: Pittsburgh, Pa. and Union, N. J.

TO: American University, Washington, D.C.
George Washington University, Washington, D. C.
University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland
Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland

FEE: \$45.00 Includes transportation by bus, four meals and
motel accommodations. (\$40.00 from Union, N.J.)

CARAVAN #2

A two (2) day trip, November 13 and 14, 1972.

FROM: Pittsburgh, Pa. and Union, N. J.

TO: Bucknell University, Lewisburg, Pa.
Penn State University, University Park, Pa.
Dickinson College, Carlisle, Pa.
Franklin and Marshall College, Lancaster, Pa.

FEE: \$45.00 Includes transportation by bus, four meals and
motel accommodations. (\$40.00 from Union, N.J.)

Students may attend more than one Caravan at the cost of \$45.00
for each trip.

cc: Chapter Presidents
General Committee
BBCCS Professional Offices
BBYO Professional Offices
BB Men's District #3 Office
BB Men's Pittsburgh Council Office
BBCCS National Office

SAMPLE 3

B'NAI B'RITH WOMEN DISTRICT THREE

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Council B'nai B'rith Career and Counseling Chairmen
FROM: District Chairman
DATE: September 20, 1972
SUBJECT: College Caravans

Plans for our College Caravans have been completed and the success of these tours depends largely upon the publicity you, as Council Chairman, give it. Since many Chapters do not have a B'nai B'rith Career and Counseling Chairman, it becomes your responsibility to see that all our members are made aware of the Caravans. Contact each Chapter President and ask her to please put on her agenda the announcement at each and every meeting until the Caravans have been completed.

In addition, it is important that you contact the various Community Centers, Synagogue Youth Groups, Temple Youth Groups and High School Guidance Counselors. I am enclosing a sample letter which you may use to make contact -- BUT MAKE CONTACT.

In addition, you will find enclosed a sample application form. I ask you to have them duplicated in your own area since it is impossible for me to judge the number of applications that will be needed. Many, I hope.

LET'S GET ROLLING NOW!!!

If I can be of any help, please contact me.

cc: BB Council Presidents
National BBCCS Office

Encls. (1) Schedule of Caravans
(2) Application form

SAMPLE 4

Date

Dear _____:

B'nai B'rith Women, District No. 3, is sponsoring a series of College Caravans which may interest many of the junior and senior high school students in your school.

These Caravans will afford the student the opportunity of visiting many college campuses where they will be addressed by an admissions officer of the school who will give them a complete rundown of the policies of the school, tuitions, entrance requirements, courses offered at the school and many other items of pertinent information. In addition, we will tour the campuses.

College Caravans have proved to be of great help to the high school student in his or her selection of a college. The Caravans are supervised by adults and, in addition, a professional counselor will accompany each tour.

Enclosed you will find a listing of the tours and a sample application form. Additional forms may be obtained by contacting (use your name and address). We would very much appreciate your advising the junior and senior students of our Caravans.

Cordially,

Name
Position

ABC/de

Encls. (2)

SAMPLE 5

NEWSPAPER PUBLICITY INSERT

COLLEGE CARAVAN PLANNED TO _____ AND _____

INQUIRIES ARE INVITED

The B'nai B'rith Career and Counseling Services of _____ announces a chartered bus tour to _____ (#) _____ of the area's leading colleges. High school students are invited to travel to _____ University and _____ College on Friday, January 23rd, leaving at 8:00 A.M. and returning at 6:00 P.M. The Fare will be \$ _____ per student (cost of noon meal not included).

The Caravan will feature group conferences with admissions counselors at each university, during which the student can get answers to his questions about program offerings and other aspects of the academic atmosphere. Tours of the campus at each school will include visits to classroom buildings, Hillel House, library, student union buildings, and other points of interest. Student guides are utilized. Students will purchase their own meals at a student union building.

A professional staff member from the BBCCS office will accompany the group and lead discussion of college preparation and entrance topics before and after inspection of the college campuses.

Registration for the Caravan is limited. Those interested are invited to call B'nai B'rith Career and Counseling Services (or name of sponsor) at _____ (phone number) before _____ (date) _____.

SAMPLE 6

NEWSPAPER PUBLICITY INSERT

COLLEGE CARAVAN

On Monday, _____ (date) _____, the B'nai B'rith Career and Counseling Services of _____, will sponsor a College Caravan to _____

(Names of Schools)

A professional staff member from the BBCCS office will accompany students wishing to visit these schools and participate in the College Caravan.

Students will have the opportunity to speak to admissions officers, visit classroom buildings, and see campus facilities and life "in action." Pre-trip, post-trip, and during-trip discussions will cover aspects of college entrance, how to assess different schools, how to determine individual needs, etc.

Cost for the _____-day trip will be \$ _____. For further information, call the office of B'nai B'rith Career and Counseling Services (or name of sponsors) at _____ (telephone number) _____.

SAMPLE 7

COLLEGE CARAVAN

(Notice to Prospective Participants Who Have Indicated an Interest in the College Caravan)

The College Caravan to _____ (school names)
in which you have indicated an interest will take place on _____ (day of week)
_____ (date). The bus will leave _____ (place of departure)
at _____ A.M. and return _____ (time and date). Deadline for reservations ac-
companied by the fare of \$ _____ is _____ (date). Meals will be
purchased on the college campuses at the personal expense of each partici-
pant in the Caravan. The Caravan will visit various facilities at _____
(names of colleges)

and include group meetings with admissions counselors. Pre-trip and post-
trip group guidance about college selection and admissions will be included.
These discussions will be led by a professional BBCCS staff member who will
accompany the group on the College Caravan as well.

Please have your parent or guardian sign the form below and return it to us
along with the fee before the deadline of _____ (date). If you
have any questions, feel free to contact this office at _____ (phone number).
We look forward to having you with us on this College Caravan.

Sincerely,

Name
Title

I hereby grant permission for my son/daughter _____ (name)
to participate in the College Caravan to _____
_____ (names of schools)

on _____ (date).

Signature: _____ (parent/guardian)

Address: _____

SAMPLE 8

(Name, address, and phone number of sponsor)

1972 FALL SCHEDULE

Caravan #1
Connecticut
October 19-20

University of Bridgeport
University of Connecticut
University of Hartford
Wesleyan University
Quinnipiac College

Caravan #2
New York
October 26-27

Ithaca College
Cornell University
Syracuse University
Colgate University

Caravan #3
Pennsylvania
November 9-10

Albright College
Franklin and Marshall College
Gettysburg College
Dickinson College

Caravan #4
Boston
November 16-17

Boston University
Emerson College
Suffolk University
Clark University

Fee: \$50.00 per Caravan - Includes transportation, four meals, and motel accommodations.

RELEASE

I grant permission to my son/daughter,

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone; _____, to go with College Caravan # _____

on _____ 1972.
(date)

I accept all responsibility for my child's actions and shall hold harmless _____
for any incidences or injuries that may occur.
(name of sponsor)

(Parent or Guardian)

(date)

B'NAI B'RITH WOMEN DISTRICT #3

Name of Student: _____ (Last) _____ (First)
Address: _____ Zip Code: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Phone: _____

(1) To American University, George Washington University, University of Maryland and Johns Hopkins University on October 30 and 31, 1972 ..
..... \$45.00

(2) To Bucknell University, Penn State University, Dickinson College and Franklin and Marshall College, November 13 and 14, 1972
..... \$45.00

(Signature of Student)

(Signature of Parent or Guardian)

(name)

(address)

(city) (state) (Zip)

20

SAMPLE 10

COLLEGE CARAVAN EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE

1. I thought the trip was: Excellent ____
 Good ____
 Could be improved ____
 2. The time spent on campus was:
 Adequate ____
 Should have been increased ____
 3. The conference with the admissions counselor was:
 Very helpful ____
 Fair ____
 Not much help ____
 4. Other schools which should be visited: _____

 5. Ways in which the trip could have been improved: _____

 6. Best part of the tour: _____

 7. Part of the tour which could have been eliminated: _____

 8. Any additional comments you care to make: _____

 9. Would you like to attend a meeting at BBCCS to plan the next trip or
to discuss problems of occupational or educational choice?

 Yes ____ No ____
 10. The presence of BBCCS Professional Counseling Staff was helpful:

 Yes ____ No ____
- Signed (optional)

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